

Kentucky Teacher

December 2005/January 2006

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

www.education.ky.gov

Owingsville students learn
about value of the farm
Page 12



State board focuses on high schools and school improvement

By Cathy Lindsey
cathy.lindsey@education.ky.gov

Kentucky students want to be challenged. They want more learning opportunities that are relevant to what they want to do in life, and they need more guidance from adults to prepare them for college and work.

This was the report from five student summits held throughout the state during November. Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit gave the report to the Kentucky Board of Education at its December meeting.

The Kentucky Department of Education hosted the summits as part of its Refocusing Secondary Education initiative. More than 1,500 middle and high school students voiced their likes, dislikes and concerns about the public education they are receiving. They also shared their wants and needs to make their high school experiences and those of future students more valuable and relevant.

Commissioner Wilhoit told the board

that responses from the student summits, called "Voices of Reasons," would be used to guide the department's work as it continues to move forward with the Refocusing Secondary Education initiative. Future work includes: more student summits in early 2006, a student advisory network and onsite focus groups in alternative schools.

Also during the December meeting, the board discussed new minimum high school graduation requirements. The department has spent several months reviewing which courses students should be required to complete to earn a diploma. Any changes would take effect in 2012. The proposed changes include:

- Requiring one mathematics course to be taken each year of high school to ensure readiness for postsecondary education or the work force based on the student's Individual Graduation Plan;
- Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II (or a course of equal rigor) will be required

See **STATE** on Page 9



Diane MacKenzie, Atherton High School Spanish teacher, is surrounded by her students as she receives congratulations and \$25,000 from Milken Family Foundation Executive Vice President Richard Sandler. The Jefferson County world language teacher was named Kentucky's 2005 Milken Family Educator.

MacKenzie receives 2005 Milken Award

By Faun S. Fishback
faun.fishback@education.ky.gov

Diane MacKenzie learned the power of teaching at an early age. As a fourth-grader, she stood before classmates to teach a lesson. "I don't remember the topic," says the Atherton High School Spanish teacher, "but I do remember my classmates being very attentive. When I finished my lesson, my classmates gave me a spontaneous round of applause. That was the first time I realized I could be a teacher — and not only a teacher, but a good teacher."

Confidence in her abilities and a dedication to helping every student achieve has followed MacKenzie across continents and grade levels throughout her 16-year teaching career. What she calls a "natural talent for teaching" helped this Jefferson County teacher become Kentucky's newest recipient of the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award during a November award ceremony.

The award is given annually to elementary and secondary school teachers, principals and other education professionals across the country. The honor includes a financial award of \$25,000 that winners may use in any way they choose.

MacKenzie is chair of the Atherton

High World Language Department. She has received the district's Superintendent's Distinguished Service Award and is a mentor and supervisor for new teachers. "I provide opportunities for new teachers to develop their own teaching style and reflect on their own teaching practices," she said.

A native of Guatemala, MacKenzie earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Louisville. She holds a teaching certificate from Universidad Rafael Landivar in Guatemala.

See **MACKENZIE** on Page 9

Countdown is on for KTLC '06

Nationally known speakers — chocolate — hundreds of Kentucky teachers sharing successful instructional strategies — chocolate — a huge exhibit area — chocolate — valuable door prizes — special registration rates for school teams — and an evening of decadent gourmet desserts ... These are just a few of the events and activities planned for the 2006 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC '06). The three-day professional development event is March 9-11, 2006, at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville.

Online registration is now available at the conference Web site, www.kentuckytcl.org. Registration is \$100 per person, if made prior to the conference. Onsite registration is \$125. Other registration options also

are available.

School teams also can take advantage of a registration special. When five or more people (teachers, administrators, council members, parents) from the same school register as a group to attend the conference,

one school member may waive the conference fee. This is a \$100 savings for each team.

Descriptions and schedules for ticketed workshops and concurrent conference sessions addressing 22 topic areas also are posted on the Web site. Ticketed workshops occur on March 9 and 10. Registration for each three-hour ticketed workshop is \$50 and must be received by

See **COUNTDOWN** on Page 10

Pathways
to
PROFICIENCY06
KENTUCKY TEACHING & LEARNING CONFERENCE

What's Inside

Education budget begins its legislative journey	3
Sign language supports literacy at T.C. Cherry	4
Education program news.....	5
Schools receive NCLB Blue Ribbon recognition	6 & 7
Students recreate history to learn.....	8
News for school leaders	11

Bulletin Board



Photo illustration by Rick McComb

still Lives

Compiled by Joy Barr
joy.barr@education.ky.gov

Conferences

English/language arts conference

The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts has set Feb. 24-25, 2006, for its 70th annual conference at the Marriott Downtown in Louisville. "Inspiring Minds — Celebrating Success" is this year's theme.

<http://conference.kcte.org/>

Reading Recovery conference

The National Reading Recovery and K-6 Classroom Literacy Conference is set for Feb. 4-7, 2006, in Columbus, Ohio. New teaching and learning strategies will

be presented to participants interested in early literacy education.

www.rrcna.org

Middle level conference

The National Middle School Association offers Middle Level Essentials Jan. 30-31, 2006, at the Hyatt Regency in Louisville. Three in-depth topics essential to the success of middle level schools will be presented: differentiated instruction, classroom management and student-led conferences, and the culture of poverty.

www.nmsa.org/

Events

American history seminars

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History announces 21 weeklong summer seminars in 2006 for high school and middle school teachers. Seminars on major topics in American history are tuition-free, and participants receive a \$500 stipend, books, room and board.

www.gilderlehrman.org/teachers/seminars1.html

Toyota Teacher Program

The Toyota International Teacher Program will select 20 high school teachers from 10 states, including Kentucky, for a fully funded tour of Japan, June 23-July 5, 2006. Teachers will learn about the country's history, education, environment and technology, and how they affect industry and society. Deadline is Jan. 9, 2006.

www.iie.org/programs/toyota

Amgen Award

The Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence recognizes and honors K-12 teachers who promote and encourage science excellence in communities where Amgen operates. Winners receive an unrestricted cash award of \$5,000 and a restricted grant of \$5,000 to the recipient's school. To nominate an outstanding teacher, visit www.amgen.com/citizenship/aaste.html. Nominations must be postmarked by Jan. 31, 2006.

State park discounts

Active and retired public employees, including teachers, administrators and school employees, qualify for special discounts on accommodations at Kentucky Resort Parks. Offer ends March 31, 2006.

www.parks.ky.gov

National archery tournament

Students and teachers from schools participating in the National Archery in the Schools program will compete March 18-19, 2006, at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville. Teachers may register student competitors online at www.nfaa-archery.org/tournaments/IndoorNationals.

Schools of Distinction

The Intel and Scholastic Schools of Distinction Award recognizes outstanding K-12 schools that can demonstrate improved scientific achievement. Several application categories are available. The application deadline is Jan. 5, 2006.

www.schoolsofdistinction.com/apply.php

Teaching core content through Kentucky traditions

The Kentucky Arts Council, in conjunction with Kentucky Crafted: The MARKET, presents a professional development seminar for educators on March 3, 2006, at

the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville. Participants will learn to connect language arts, social studies, music and visual arts to the real world of Kentucky's arts, crafts and music, as well as interact with professional artists and craftsmen.

Registration is \$50 and closes Feb. 18 or when the seminar is filled.

Contact: Judy Sizemore, (606) 364-5831, circuit@prtcnet.org

www.kycraft.ky.gov

Theater for all

The Thoroughbred Center in Lexington announces its next production for school groups. Grades K-5 can enter the magical world of "The Little Moon Theater" and travel from town to town with Jojo, Jip, Nicolette and a retiring fairy godmother. Performances are Feb. 16-17, 2006, at 10 a.m. and noon; tickets are \$4.50.

Contact: Box office, (859) 293-1853

www.thethoroughbredcenter.com/theatre/schedule.asp

Stage One in Louisville announces two upcoming productions for school groups.

"Alexander, Who's Not Not Not Not Not Not Going to Move," based on the book by Judith Viorst, is recommended for grades K-4. Performances are Jan. 17-April 13, 2006.

"And Then They Came For Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank," by James Still, will be performed Feb. 2-April 14, 2006. The play is recommended for grades 5-12.

All performances are at the Kentucky Center, Bomhard Theater at 10 a.m. and noon. Tickets are \$6.

Contact: Box office, (502) 562-0161

www.stageone.org/season/

Lexington Children's Theatre offers "Señora Torquga," based on the book by Roxanne Schroeder-Arce about a Mexican storyteller and the dreams of a young boy named Pedro. Recommended for grades K-4. Performances Jan. 24-27, 2006, are at 10 a.m. and 11:45 a.m.; tickets are \$5.

Contact: Box office, (859) 254-4546

www.lctonstage.org/fieldtrips.htm

Ag Day poster and essay contest

Students in grades 1-8 may participate in the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's annual Ag Day poster and essay contest. Winners for each grade will receive a \$100 savings bond. The theme for this year's contest is "Kentucky Agriculture: Growing for Our Future." Entries must be postmarked by Feb. 24, 2006.

Contact: Teresa Prather, (502) 564-4696, teresa.prather@ky.gov

www.kyagr.com/mkt_promo/education/kaec/programs/postercontest/Winners.htm

Commissioner's Comments

Education budget begins its legislative journey

By Gene Wilhoit

gene.wilhoit@education.ky.gov

During the 1970s and '80s, "Schoolhouse Rock" taught children a lot about mathematics, grammar, science and history. As another session of the Kentucky General Assembly approaches, I'm reminded of the segment in which a "sad little scrap of paper" laments that he's only a bill until he's made into a law.

"I'm Just a Bill" helps explain the legislative process and points out all the efforts that go into making laws. The song tells about the committee meetings, public input and lawmaker discussions that move bills through what can be a lengthy legislative process before a bill becomes a law.

A lot of time and work already has gone into the bills that will be discussed, voted on and perhaps passed by Kentucky lawmakers during the upcoming General Assembly. The 2006 session convenes Jan. 3 in Frankfort and continues for 60 days.

The Kentucky Board of Education and the Department of Education have been working for several months preparing recommendations to improve or update existing laws. The board also has discussed priorities for the state's public school education funding needs.

The education budget is just one part of the complex budget bill that Gov. Ernie Fletcher will review prior to presenting it to the state legislature for passage. The decision on how Kentucky's revenues will be spent during the next two fiscal years rests on the legislators' shoulders.

As you can imagine, this "little scrap of paper" is very important to each school in every district. It is through the budget bill that money for all state-funded elementary and secondary programs is allocated.

Foremost in our development of the 2006-2008 education budget has been to provide the governor and lawmakers with a realistic prediction of the money our public schools will need for the next two fiscal years. We have prepared a budget that we feel will sustain most existing programs and increase funding so others can expand.

With enactment of education reform in 1990, the legislature made a big financial investment to fund the changes necessary to improve teaching and learning in Kentucky public schools. Since that initial investment, state funding of our schools has barely kept pace with inflation. In some instances, state funding for programs remains at the same level as 15 years ago.

We developed the recommended 2006-2008 budget to ensure three goals: high student performance, high-quality teaching and administration, and a strong and supportive environment for every student. We are asking for increased Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) appropriations for school districts in four areas: teacher compensation, programs that strengthen skills of students with limited English proficiency, preschool funding and technology upgrades.

Increasing SEEK

If our schools are to continue the work of moving students to proficiency and beyond, we must retain and attract high-quality

teachers. The best way to accomplish that is with competitive salaries and compensation programs.

We are asking for more money to provide a cost-of-living increase for all teachers and a small increase for essential services. We also want \$20 million to give districts the opportunity to implement differentiated compensation programs for teachers in their schools, such as incentives for mentor teachers or for teachers who work in low-performing schools.

Additionally, we are requesting money to increase the school year by two days each year of the biennium. One day provides additional instructional time for students. The second day offers teachers opportunity to develop their professional skills and additional planning time.

We are requesting additional funding to give relief to districts that provide services for students with limited English proficiency. As many of you know, the number of limited English speaking students is rising at a rapid pace.

This year, 119 districts are spending nearly \$7 million to provide services to more than 11,000 students representing approximately 96 different languages.

Kentucky also is experiencing growth in the number of students entering preschool. More than 20,000 children participated in the program — 64 percent identified as having a disability — in 2004.

Districts have been successful in identifying and enrolling young children in the program. However, state funding has not kept pace with the growth.

Full state funding of the preschool program would allow local districts to serve more children in need of early interventions and help pay for transporting the students.

For nearly 15 years, Kentucky schools have been working hard to give students technology skills demanded by the 21st century workplace. However, state funding and support for our once nationally recognized technology system has slipped.

We are asking for an additional \$25 million in each year of the 2006-2008 biennium to help local districts replace old computer workstations and upgrade aging technology tools. Local districts would match these state funds to enhance their school technology.

Policy issues

The state board and department have endorsed some non-budgetary legislative proposals related to public education. These proposals ask for clarification or changes in existing legislation.

The board would like to clarify language on principal selection to indicate that it is the job of the school council to select a principal from candidates recommended by the superintendent.

The board also would like for legislators to address several issues pertaining to school facilities:

- Repeal of the sunset provision of existing law to ensure any eligible district is able to levy the growth nickel tax if needed for facilities because of unusual increases in student population.

- Suspension of the prevailing wage requirement for school construction for two to five years so the department and state board can study the impact of the law on costs and quality of work.

The board is asking lawmakers to require low-performing schools to review the readiness in reading and mathematics of all students entering the school. In addition, these schools would be required to provide appropriate interventions for students needing additional assistance.

In identifying these issues as priorities at its October meeting, the state board recognized that other education topics may arise during the legislative session and will be following closely the work of the legislators. Everything is "just a bill" until it makes its journey through the legislative process.

That is why it is important for each of us in the education profession — as well as parents and concerned citizens — to be informed and involved about the proposed legislation that will be discussed during the session. Some of the bills will become

laws that will govern our schools for years to come.

You can keep track of education legislation, as well as meetings of the legislative education subcommittees and committees. Everything is posted and updated daily on the Legislative Research Commission Web site at www.lrc.ky.gov.

The Web site provides information on how you can reach your legislator by postal mail, e-mail or toll-free phone call. You may want to let your legislators know how much additional funding is needed for teacher compensation, fully funded preschool, technology upgrades and services for students with limited English proficiency.

We all must continue to work as partners with all education supporters to guarantee that teaching and learning in all public schools is a priority for Kentucky.

(To comment on this topic, send e-mail to the commissioner at gene.wilhoit@education.ky.gov.)



Photo illustration by Rick McComb

Collaborative learning

Primary student Joel Vasquez and Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit have a lively discussion about bats and their habitat during the commissioner's visit this fall to Lost River Elementary. The Warren County school is one of four public schools in the state to receive the Blue Ribbon School designation. (See Pages 6 and 7 for more about Kentucky's Blue Ribbon Schools.)

Sign language supports literacy skills at T.C. Cherry

By Joy Barr

joy.barr@education.ky.gov

What was the most popular second language acquired by America's hearing population in the 1990s? Statistics reveal that American Sign Language (ASL) has grown rapidly in popularity among the hearing. Educators are finding it helps increase a student's overall vocabulary and helps children hear faster and read better. Many schools are using sign language to help support reading literacy with positive results.

T.C. Cherry Elementary has been implementing sign language into the curriculum for two years. Itinerant teacher Kristy Reeder uses sign language as she works with all students at the K-5 school in Bowling Green.

"Sign language supports reading literacy," said Reeder. She meets 30 minutes each week with every classroom at the school and occasionally works with classes or groups for special projects.

The school's signing curriculum is based on Marilyn Daniels' book, "Dancing with Words: Signing for Hearing Children's Literacy." According to Daniels, students' comprehension and verbal skills grow and blossom through the connection of signing and language literacy. The book states that sign language may be a more natural communication tool than the spoken word.

Sign language supports literacy by giving children an outlet for learning both phonics and vocabulary. It is a kinesthetic, visual way that supports the auditory process of learning language.

Research shows that sign language develops more of the brain than simply learning a spoken language. Children that sign have been found to have larger vocabularies and better comprehension of concepts behind words.

Signing is introduced to the children at T.C. Cherry in kindergarten. They finger spell letters as they learn the actual letters of the alphabet. They sign the

letters as they hear them.

As the students begin learning sight words, they spell and sign the words they are learning. Reeder and other classroom teachers finger spell words for students without using their voices. Students must recognize the words and spell them. Signing also helps students remember vocabulary words as they learn both the finger spelling and the signs that go with different vocabulary words, Reeder said.

Reeder receives the core content vocabulary from all classroom teachers. She then develops her lesson plans using sign language. She has helped train the classroom teachers to use the alphabet in their classrooms. During language and spelling instruction, teachers incorporate signing as they teach.

Signing is used across the curriculum at T.C. Cherry. Reeder often works with an individual teacher on projects to incorpo-

rate signing that directly correlates to specific core content. For example, when students were studying the life cycle of a plant, Reeder used her 30-minutes with the classes teaching the life cycle stages in sign language to help the students better remember the content.

Students at T.C. Cherry are testing well on vocabulary and language tests, and this may be attributed to the addition of sign language into the curriculum, Reeder said. Sign language helps students improve reading skills by increasing memory. Students learn a vocabulary word in conjunction with its sign word.

During her weekly session in each classroom, Reeder also teaches conversational skills as well as poetry and music in sign language. She invites deaf and hearing-impaired individuals to the school so students can interact with those in the community who sign. T.C. Cherry students also have worked with Kentucky

School for the Deaf students on "video-pal" projects as they learn to understand conversational signs.

Reeder uses a variety of teaching styles including media, direct instruction and collaborative group work. Students learn core content vocabulary, literature-based signing, conversational skills and poetry. This year, Reeder is working with the Nashville public library to incorporate literature-based programs into T.C. Cherry's sign language curriculum.

The students sign consistently with conversation and are gaining overall understanding of the different components of language. Students get very excited about class and feel good about learning sign language.

The teachers at T.C. Cherry support the sign language program and want it to continue. A lot of the success of the program is dependent upon the classroom teachers and how they

implement it with their students because Reeder only sees each class briefly each week, she said.

"When I go into a classroom and see complete involvement of all 20 students in the room, I know that a teacher has something great going on. This is the case when Ms. Reeder works with our students — from our 6-year-olds to our 11-year-olds," states Principal Judy Whitson. "It is one of those classes that when it is over, you wonder where the class time went."

"Just walking into a morning assembly program and seeing so many of our students signing songs like 'My Old Kentucky Home' and 'The Star Spangled Banner' is a rewarding experience. The students learn from each other, as well as Ms. Reeder. The kids feel pride in themselves," continued Whitson.

Contact: Kristy Reeder at T.C. Cherry Elementary, (270) 746-2230, kreeder@b-g.k12.ky.us



Teacher Kristy Reeder, right, and primary student Leslee Miller pause in the hallway between classes at T.C. Cherry Elementary to watch as Andrew Morfin signs a conversation with them.

Photo by Rick McComb

Burnett and Cornett have new roles as DSFs

Arlene Burnett and Debra Cornett are the newest members of the Kentucky Department of Education's cadre of District Support Facilitators (DSFs). The two veteran educators join six other DSFs in assisting Kentucky public school districts with Title I schools that have been identified for improvement for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act purposes.

Both schools and school districts are held to the requirements of Adequate Yearly Progress under NCLB. Of Kentucky's 176 public school districts, 76, or 43.2 percent, met 100 percent of their target goals. Overall, 141 districts met 80 percent or more of their goals.

For NCLB requirements, districts are gauged on total student population. This can mean that, even if every school within a district makes AYP, the district may not because of the total size of subpopulations and their performance.

Burnett's assignment as DSF includes school districts in southcentral and southeastern Kentucky. For the past three years, she served Kentucky

schools as a Highly Skilled Educator. She spent 32 years in the Bell County and Middlesboro Independent school systems as a teacher, Title I supervisor, district assessment coordinator and an instructional supervisor for grades K-12.

She is certified by the Kentucky Association of School Councils as an open-response and school based decision making council trainer.

Burnett is in her fifth year as a local school board member. She also has served on several committees through the Kentucky School Boards Association.

Cornett will work with central Kentucky school districts, as well as Fayette County and Jefferson County districts. For the past five years, she was the advocate for intermediate student achievement and district assessment coordinator for Grant County Schools.

Prior to that, she was a Highly Skilled Educator, working with low-performing Kentucky schools. Now in her 27th year as an educator, Cornett has taught every elementary-level grade and was a middle school

science teacher for six years.

As a professional staff assistant for two Fayette County schools in the 1990s, she designed professional development for district administrators and teachers.

Cornett was an adjunct assistant professor at Eastern Kentucky University and has assisted teachers in becoming National Board Certified.

The DSFs are part of the department's Division of Federal Programs and Instructional Equity. Pauline Carr was recently appointed division director.

Carr brings to the position more than seven years of working with federal education programs. She also is a former business education teacher and has worked with many career and technical education programs.

For more information about the District Support Facilitators, go to www.education.ky.gov and click on "KDE QuickLinks." Select "Federal Programs" from the list and click.



Photo by Pete Morgan, Fulton Independent Schools

Walking a not-so straight line

Jared Lynch, back left, and Clint Foster watch Officer Shawn Scoggin steady their classmate Susannah Milner, a junior at Fulton High School, as she tries to walk a straight line while wearing goggles and a listening device that simulate alcohol and drug impairment. Juniors and seniors at the Fulton Independent school participated in a three-hour Students Against Impaired Driving (SAID) program led by Sgt. Jere Hughes and officers of the Fulton Police Department. The department received a state grant to implement an alcohol and drug awareness program that included impairment devices, computer simulations and a PowerPoint demonstration of the dangers of drinking and driving. Students participated in a mock "driving under the influence" arrest and observed a mock court trial conducted by Fulton County Judge Hunter Whitsell II and Patti Hughes, Four Rivers Behavioral Health counselor. The program was aligned to practical living and social studies content, and students answered an open-response writing prompt about what they learned.

Larger high schools are creating smaller learning communities

Three years ago, the Kentucky Educational Development Corp. (KEDC) received a federal grant to personalize learning environments for students in high schools with enrollments of at least 1,000 students in grades 9-12. The seven schools participating in the Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) grant — Paul Blazer (Ashland Independent), Johnson Central, Perry County Central, Lincoln County, Nelson County, Knox County and Madison Central high schools — all report student achievement gains as a result of improved culture and climate.

The grant has allowed the schools to create smaller learning communities within their large student populations. These teacher/student communities are supported by 9th-grade academies, advisor/advisee programs, a schoolwide reading focus, extra tutoring and mentoring, master schedule overhauls, same gender classes, increased parent involvement, increased focus on professional development directly linked to student achievement, better understand-

ing the diverse learning needs of students, and leadership support/development.

Kevin Hub, assistant superintendent of Madison County Schools and chair of the KEDC SLC Leadership Council, emphasizes "... it doesn't cost all that much to change the culture of a large high school from being schedule-driven to being student-driven. Definitely, it was one of the smartest shifts in philosophy we've ever implemented. Our discipline referrals are down, suspensions and dropouts are down, and our CTBS and CATS scores are up. We love it."

The SLC grant provides ongoing networking and professional development opportunities for educators in the seven schools. The SLC leadership team meets quarterly for in-depth assessment of what's working and what's not.

The leadership team also meets each year for a two-day planning and "best practices" retreat. Nationally known consultants and several Kentucky leadership trainers are working

with the schools.

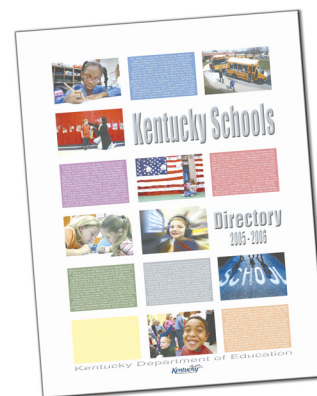
Teams of administrators and teacher leaders from other Kentucky high schools that are interested in high school restructuring can participate in professional development opportunities offered by this SLC grant. Upcoming events include:

- "A Reading Conference — Focus on Middle and High School," Feb. 7, 2006, Embassy Suites, Lexington
- "Program Accountability and Effect Size," led by Mike Ruthenford, May 2, 2006
- "Mathematics and Science Conference," led by Silver, Strong & Associates, June 2006
- 2nd Annual High School Best Practice Expo, featuring SLC schools' programs, July 2006

Details for all events will be posted on the Web site, www.kedc.org (click on "Professional Development"), as finalized.

For more information, contact Donetta Brown, SLC/PD programs coordinator, donetta.brown@kedc.org, toll free at (800) 737-0204 or (606) 928-0205.

New 'Kentucky Schools Directory' will be available in January



The Kentucky Department of Education has published the Kentucky Schools Directory for the 2005-2006 school year. Complimentary copies of the directory will be mailed to all Kentucky superintendents and principals in January.

The directory provides phone numbers and addresses for all public schools and districts as well as state government education agencies, state and national education organizations, education cooperatives and special education cooperatives.

The directory also contains listings for Kentucky higher education institutions and non-public schools. All department employees and programs are included in the directory. There also is a guide for using electronic mail to reach individuals in public school districts.

An abbreviated version of the directory is on the department Web site at www.education.ky.gov. Click on "KDE QuickLinks" in the upper right-hand corner and select "Kentucky Schools Directory." To purchase copies, click on "Bookstore — KDE Publications & Videos" from "KDE QuickLinks."

Kentucky schools receive 2005 NCLB

By Joy Barr
joy.barr@education.ky.gov

Four Kentucky public schools recently were named 2005 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Blue Ribbon Schools. Brodhead Elementary in Rockcastle County, Lost River Elementary in Warren County, Salyersville Grade School in Magoffin County and Southern Elementary in Ohio County received the designation. Two Kentucky private schools, Christ the King School in Fayette County and St. Agnes Parish School in Jefferson County, also were named.

The NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools program honors public and private K-12 schools

that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

The program requires schools to meet either of two assessment criteria. It recognizes schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance in reading and mathematics over the last three years in accordance with state assessment systems; and it rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Schools also must make Adequate Yearly Progress under the requirements of the federal NCLB Act.

Success has no boundaries at Brodhead Elementary



Primary teacher Jennifer Adkisson listens as 6-year-old Michaela Barron counts \$100 in play money during class at Brodhead Elementary (Rockcastle County).

Located in Rockcastle County, this P-5 rural school has approximately 390 students. While the student population is not very racially diverse, Principal Caroline Graves says that 63 percent of the students participate in the free- or reduced-price lunch program, and 18 percent are students with special needs.

"I believe we were selected as a NCLB Blue Ribbon School because of our success with demographic groups. Our school culture is centered on the belief that all children can learn at high levels. This is not simply a statement but an action. We feel that it is our responsibility for all children to succeed," said Graves.

That sense of responsibility is producing results. Brodhead posted a school index of 109.7 on the 2005 CATS tests.

Collaborative learning classrooms, a modern library and technology center are just some examples of positive reinforcement available to all Brodhead students. Students are given equal opportunities to learn and achieve to their highest potential, Graves said.

Classroom teachers use core curriculum in a variety of ways that build positive learning experiences to prepare students for middle school and for life. Lifelong lessons are taught to children to foster self worth — pride, respect, cooperation and responsibility.

"We focus on instruction when teaching the curriculum and finding appropriate ways to teach in order to meet the individual needs of students. For example, every student has 90 minutes of reading daily," said Graves. "We evaluate all students frequently and design instruction using the best methods that they can learn."

Lost River Elementary emphasizes teamwork

"Together, We're Better With Pride" — that's the school motto at this Warren County School. It is emphasized throughout the entire school body.

"Everyone here at Lost River believes in teamwork, and this personal relationship of care and trust contributed to our becoming a NCLB Blue Ribbon School," said Principal Jim Goff.

More than 70 percent of the students participate in the free- or reduced-price lunch program. Lost River has 175 English as a Second Language (ESL) students, approximately 80 students with special needs and 135 speech- and language-impaired students, Goff said. The school's 2005 CATS index of 96.4 is very close to the goal of 100 set for all Kentucky public schools to reach by the year 2014.

"We are very proud that there are minimal gaps in the scores of these groups of students," said Principal Goff. The faculty has embraced a 'no excuses' approach to education.

Teachers hold all Lost River students accountable. Students learn and become productive citizens as the family, community and school embrace these common goals. Lost River has established a pattern of continuous improvement over the last six years.

"Lost River teachers love and care for their students, and the students know this. They feel that they are cared for here and will do whatever the teacher asks. This confidence helps students perform to higher standards," said Goff.



At left, students at Lost River Elementary (Warren County) assemble in the media center to watch a performance of the "Kids on the Block" puppets.

To learn more

If you'd like to learn more about these NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools to improve teaching and learning, contact school principals: Caroline Graves (606) 758-8512, or Jim Goff at Lost River (606) 0334, jgoff@warren.ky.gov. Teresa Byers (274) 3462, tbyers@southern.ky.gov.

Blue Ribbon recognition

This is the third year for schools to be honored under the NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools program. There are more than 100,000 public and private schools in the United States, and more than 300 schools (296 public and 50 private) received the Blue Ribbon designation this year. Principals and other representatives from each school attended a recognition ceremony in Washington D.C. in November.

The goal of the NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools program is to promote and support the improvement of education in America by identifying schools throughout the country whose programs and services other schools can model. Schools learn from each other and by working together to make excellence a standard for all schools.

Kentucky's NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools have excelled in many ways. Each public school is making significant progress on their accountability indices on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS).

High test scores at these elementary schools are the result of teamwork on the part of students, principals, teachers, staff, parents and community leaders. Positive and encouraging faculty relationships with students and their parents have allowed the four public schools to have a greater chance of helping students reach their maximum potential.

Southern Elementary nurtures a learning environment

Southern Elementary Principal Teresa Byers says Southern's highly qualified teachers expect high performance from each student. The rural Ohio County school has an enrollment of 229 students and posted a 2005 CATS index of 105.9.

The school exceeded 100 points in five of seven content areas on the 2005 CATS tests, Byers said. Its results place Southern among the top five scoring schools in the state in science and near the top in social studies. Fifty percent of the school's student population participates in the free- or reduced-price lunch program.

Southern students place great emphasis on learning and high achievement. Parents and members of the community are proud of Southern's success and are very involved in the school's activities, said Byers. Teachers provide relevance to instruction and have developed positive relationships among students. They provide a rigorous learning environment that challenges all students to learn and be successful.

"As principal of Southern Elementary, I recognize the important legacy of this high-performing school. It is my goal to help Southern continue to keep the tradition alive," said Byers.



Southern Elementary (Ohio County) students pass under a banner proclaiming their Blue Ribbon School status as they make their way to an assembly where they accepted their award from Kentucky Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit.

Communicating about success is key at Salyersville Grade School



Donnie Gipson, left, and Matthew Cooper are intent on examining the contents of a barn owl's stomach during science class at Salyersville Grade School (Magoffin County).

Salyersville Grade School, located in Magoffin County, believes its communications between students, parents and the community is imperative to student success. This NCLB Blue Ribbon School strives to help students develop academically, be creative, and learn to be independent thinkers who will meet the future with confidence.

Principal Grover Arnett says the focus of the entire school has been on mathematics, writing and reading strategies. The school's 2005 CATS index is 82.9, and it is well on the way to reaching proficiency by 2014, he said.

Salyersville students have many opportunities to excel. The school offers a state-of-the-art technology center with wireless network. Computers in classrooms, the media center and two computer labs allow students to use technology in their learning. Teachers and staff strive to meet the educational goals and standards for every student. The curriculum reflects both male and female interests to ensure that all students are instructed, graded and treated equitably, Arnett added.

Teachers have received instruction in multiple intelligences, diverse teaching strategies and computer proficiency. The faculty uses the Star Reading program to assess student achievement. Star Reading is an achievement-level learning information system that allows teachers to accurately assess students' reading abilities in 10 minutes or less. Students take the test three times a year to monitor their progress. Pre- and post-test information tells teachers if learning has occurred and allows them to intervene to help struggling students.

Magoffin County Schools provides a mathematics consultant to help all district schools improve mathematics learning. The consultant works with teachers to model instruction and strategies focused on mathematics sub-domains. This work includes the use of hands-on manipulatives and modeling open-response questions. The consultant assesses student performance and provides valuable feedback to teachers.

Learn more ...

If you'd like to learn more about the programs NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools are using to improve teaching and learning, contact the principals:

Shirley Graves at Brodhead Elementary, (502) 58-8512, cgraves@rockcastle.k12.ky.us
 Goff at Lost River Elementary, (270) 746-goff@warren.k12.ky.us
 Teresa Byers at Southern Elementary, (270) 62, tbyers@ohio.k12.ky.us

Grover Arnett at Salyersville Elementary, (606) 349-3411, garnett@magoffin.k12.ky.us

A complete list of this year's NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools is available at www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/awards.html.

More information about the NCLB Blue Ribbon Schools Program is available at www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html.

Students recreate history to learn

By Cathy Lindsey

cathy.lindsey@education.ky.gov

This fall, a group of Hardin County students were jumping over each other to learn more about history. As part of their study of ancient Greece, seventh-graders at Bluegrass Middle School reenacted the bull-leaping event from the original Olympic games of 776 B.C.

This type of role-playing instruction is widely used at Bluegrass Middle to increase student engagement, and it's proving to be a successful way of teaching history, the Bluegrass principal and social studies teachers say.

"Simulations, role-playing, debates, along with any other hands-on activities increase student success," said Bluegrass Middle School Principal Brenda Pirtle. "Students who are actively engaged in the content are focused and on-task, which increases academic success and decreases student discipline issues."

Educators have long believed that student success is directly related to student engagement. When lessons are appealing and interesting, students are more likely to take an active role in learning, Pirtle said. History teachers at Bluegrass Middle School are reaching into the past to give life to history in their classrooms.

When teacher James Foster's classes studied Greek history, they learned about the social structure and government of that time. The students were divided into five teams to represent Greek city-states. They took the names of Sparta, Athens, Argos, Megara and Corinth. The teams were challenged with academic tasks to accomplish as they made their journeys to the Olympic site on Mount Olympus — and the end of the unit.

If students are working in groups, they are using leadership skills, which tap into inter-personal learning styles, Foster explained. "If students are encouraged to display group spirit by creating a banner, they are able to access kinesthetic learning while making the banner and linguistic learning when they create a slogan."

"If students are asked to justify why their group made a certain decision, the verbal learning style is engaged," he said. "If students are asked to discuss concepts before making a final decision, auditory learners have the opportunity to hear information in a non-threatening way from their group members."

Students made togas to wear, and they performed original plays about Greek gods and goddesses. They discovered that the first Olympic events were held to honor Zeus, the supreme leader of the gods and goddesses. They designed their Olympic events to be like the ancient competitions.

Foster believes these types of projects enable students to display their mastery



Bluegrass Middle School students play a competitive game of "bull-leaping" as part of the Olympic Games conducted during their study of ancient Greece.

of content. To successfully participate in the simulation, they must internalize key facts, he said.

"For example, a student could not give a fictional speech to the Roman Coliseum if he didn't know what topics were important to Romans or the rules of discourse in the coliseum," Foster said. "Students are more willing to dig through the facts and learn if they have a real-life objective in front of them."

Adventures in Egypt

When teaching a unit on ancient Egypt, student teacher Dan Mahon showed his class of seventh-graders how to mummify a chicken, Queen Chickalot. Students learned the steps of mummification, including removing the internal organs, drying out the body, wrapping the body and the ceremonial funeral procession.

In preparing for the funeral of the "queen," students researched the roles of different Egyptians involved in a similar ceremony. Some students became priests who performed the service. Some were artisans who made gifts to bury with the queen. Classmates were also mourners, funeral caterers, ditch diggers and coffin-builders.

"The students clearly embraced their roles," said Mahon. "This type of project

reaches more students because it is fun. They were talking about it in the hallways before and after class."

Mahon said simulations and role-playing projects allow all students to participate, and they promote student engagement. Anytime you can make a student excited about learning, that's something they'll take with them for a long time, he said.

Back in the U.S.A.

Bluegrass teacher Cathy Todd's eighth-grade class also is using simulations in its study of the pre-Revolutionary War era.

"This unit provides many different activities that help me reach out to all students," Todd said. "It reaches out to all learning styles."

Todd's students have created taverns and tavern signs, researched and role-played historic events and important figures, and learned to sing "No More Kings" from "Schoolhouse Rock." They also have created a shoebox time capsule.

"Students get more involved with these activities because they truly enjoy them," she said. "I also feel that the excitement I have when teaching this way carries over to their attitudes and work."

Todd has many other activities planned for this unit. Students will participate in speech contests, a mock delegation debate about the Declaration of Independence, military drill procedures and battle planning. Students also will study colonial dances, poetry, flag designing, peace treaty negotiations and colonial cooking.

"These experiences create emotional engagement in the students, which create curiosity and lead students to deeper questions and understanding about the content," Todd said. "This type of instruction combines visual, auditory and kinesthetic activities, which makes learning more meaningful and permanent. Since students usually have a preferred modality of learning style, appealing to all three gives them opportunities to stretch from their comfort zone."

Innovation in the classroom can be key to reaching all students, the Bluegrass Middle School teachers agree. The school's results on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) have shown steady improvement in the last five years. Scores in social studies have improved 10 points since 2002.

"When students are engaged, the learning process is much more efficient," Todd said. "When they connect emotionally with the learning — that experience is imprinted in their long-term memory, and they are able to access higher levels of thinking. When engaged, students are less likely to be bored and misbehave. Making it fun works!"

Contact: Brenda Pirtle at Bluegrass Middle School, (270) 765-2658, bpirtle@hardin.k12.ky.us

History classroom resources

Interested in learning more about classroom simulations that involve a variety of learning styles? Here are Web resources recommended by the Bluegrass Middle School social studies teachers:

www.interact-simulations.com/
www.todaysteacher.com/Simulations.htm
www.multimedialearning.org/index.html
www.teachtc.com/default.asp

Talk to Us!



Kentucky Teacher wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

E-mail: kyteacher@education.ky.gov

Phone: (502) 564-3421 or (800) 533-5372 (toll free in Kentucky)

Fax: (502) 564-6470

Write: Kentucky Teacher
 612 Capital Plaza Tower
 500 Mero St.
 Frankfort, KY 40601

STATE from Page 1

courses; and

- The minimum course for credit shall be Algebra I.

After more intensive review, the board will make a final decision on the new requirements at its February meeting.

The commissioner also presented the state public schools' budget overview report. The biennial Kentucky Board of Education funding priorities will provide:

- A teacher compensation proposal to assist districts in attracting and retaining quality teachers. It includes a cost-of-living increase for all teachers and funding to extend the school calendar to give more time for student learning and more time for teachers to develop their professional skills;

- Funding for districts to ensure a strong preschool experience for Kentucky's most vulnerable children, children with disabilities and those from disadvantaged homes;

- More resources for local districts to serve Kentucky's growing population of students whose first language is not Eng-

lish; and

- Replacement for Kentucky's aging technology system.

Low-performing districts

The board continued its discussion on interventions for low-performing districts. The revised proposal presented at the meeting provides a voluntary assistance option and a targeted team assistance approach to help low-performing schools. Each team would consist of the local superintendent, an assigned superintendent mentor from the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, a representative from the Kentucky School Boards Association, a Highly Skilled Educator and a Kentucky Department of Education administrator.

The team would develop and implement a district/school improvement plan that would include intervention strategies outlined under five major issues: school culture, leadership, articulated curriculum, effective instruction, and data-driven decision making and measuring progress. The plan would include strategies identified specifically to each district's needs.

The improvement plan would require the endorsement from all team members before it could be submitted to the department for final approval and release of funds to support implementation. Department staff reported to the board that this type of collaborative intervention would provide — for the first time — systemic improvement plans implemented with the school, district, local board and department personnel.

Other business

The board agreed to send a letter to the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) encouraging the group's Board of Control and delegates to reach an agreement on whether or not to split tournament play into public and private divisions.

Board members urged KHSAA delegates to work together to address the problems that sparked the initial proposal. If no progress is made, the next step will involve a mediation panel.

The board also agreed by split-decision to amend the regulation regarding the minimum nutritional standards for foods

and beverages. After review by the state legislature's Administrative Regulation Review Subcommittee, the regulation was changed to permit beverages sold in vending machines in middle and high schools to be up to 20 ounces in volume. The state board of education had previously agreed to a maximum volume of 17 ounces.

The board decided to send letters to school officials encouraging them to consider the health of their students and exercise local control, within statutory and regulatory requirements, regarding beverage size.

The next meeting of the state board of education will be Jan. 4, 2006, in Frankfort. The focus of this meeting will be discussion of the proposed minimum high school graduation requirements and the Commonwealth Diploma Program. More information about the board is available online at www.education.ky.gov. Click on "KDE QuickLinks" in the upper right-hand corner. Scroll down to "State Board of Education" and click.



Photo by Rick McComb

Finding the facts

Kadeadra Barnett, a student at Salyersville Grade School in Magoffin County, finds the answer in her textbook as she and her classmates study the food pyramid.

MACKENZIE from Page 1

She was a 1988 Fulbright Scholar.

Atherton Principal John Hudson, said that MacKenzie "... captures the imagination and interest of her students with her engaging personality and mastery of the Spanish language. Ms. MacKenzie's passion for teaching is evident in everything she does."

MacKenzie approaches world language teaching as a good will ambassador, she said. She teaches Spanish, but also her culture. During her teaching career, she has collaborated with different content area teachers developing cross-curricular activities that give all students access to the Spanish language and culture.

In her own classroom, the focus is on each individual student and what she can do to fortify student strengths and offer opportunities for success. "I develop a SWOC (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges) analysis for each one of my students. The most important part of my analysis is the opportunities component. Teachers have to provide opportunities for success," MacKenzie said.

She selects teaching strategies based on her students' learning styles — targeting multiple intelligences and different ways of learning. "I include music in my classes. I look for popular Spanish songs, and I use them to teach grammar concepts, develop vocabulary and refine listening skills," MacKenzie said. "I present mathematical problems in Spanish. We write short stories or present short plays in Spanish. When presenting new content, I use color code content and include diagrams to present new concepts. I include movement when teaching numbers or directions. Through the years, I have learned that

by tailoring my teaching strategies around the multiple intelligences my students succeed at learning Spanish."

She relies on periodic teaching/learning assessments to give her feedback on her teaching and student learning. "If most of my students succeed, that is an indicator that I did a good job communicating my message," she



MacKenzie

said. "However, if most do not do well on the assessment, that is an indicator that I need to modify my teaching or my assessment instrument."

She talks with students regularly about their progress. However, students are accountable for their own learning in her classes, and she has them develop plans for improving their grades.

"I have had the opportunity to teach in the United States and overseas — at all levels from elementary school to college," MacKenzie said. "These experiences have made me realize that even though grade levels, languages and geographical locations have been so different, the teaching process has remained constant throughout. Teachers facilitate students' learning processes, and students learn with the guidance of their teachers."

MacKenzie will represent Kentucky educators at the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference in Washington in the spring. She will join nearly 100 educators from 48 states and the District of Columbia at the conference.

The Milken Foundation was established in 1985, and the first awards were given in 1987. Forty-six Kentucky educators have received the award since Kentucky began participating in the awards program in 1993.

COUNTDOWN from Page 1

Feb. 21, 2006.

Featured presenters

Eight nationally known speakers are scheduled presenters for the ticketed workshops on March 9 and 10 and several conference sessions. They join hundreds of Kentucky teachers and vendors of educational products who will be conference session presenters. The featured presenters at KTLc '06 are:

The conference keynote speaker is **Willard Daggett**, president of the International Center for Leadership in Education who is helping schools throughout the country with school improvement initiatives. During his March 10 keynote titled, "Preparing Students for Their Future," Daggett will get conference attendees thinking about what students need to know and be able to do to be successful.

Immediately following the keynote, Daggett will present "Moving from Promising Schools to Proven Models of Success." He will describe the goals of the recently formed Kentucky Successful Practices Alliance and explain the work that must be done in Kentucky middle and high schools to meet the needs of all students in the 21st century.

Deneen Frazier Bowen, founder and director of ActWith, will draw on her acting, teaching and technology experience to challenge educators to leverage the interests of today's youth to increase their excitement about education. Using digital technology to tell the stories, Bowen will present "The Natives are Restless and The Power of Story — Digital Style" on March 9.

Michael Hall, deputy superintendent of Information Technology with the Georgia Department of Education, will use his first-hand experience to show educators what changes are needed in the classroom for 21st century learners. His three-hour workshop, "Creating 21st Century Learning Environments: Changing the Way We Educate Our Students," is set for March 9.

A former high school principal, Hall also will conduct a two-hour session on March 10 about 9th grade academies and how they help students transition from middle school to high school.

Kati Haycock, a familiar presenter to Kentucky educators, will lead a morning and afternoon workshop, "Improving Achievement and Closing Gaps Between Groups: Lessons from Schools and Districts on the Performance Frontier," on March 10. During each presen-

tation, she will review achievement data, pointing out patterns among different groups of students. She also will share lessons from high-achieving and high-gaining schools and districts on what works to improve achievement for all students for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements.

Edie Holcomb, executive director of Instructional Services and a former educator, is a first-time KTLc presenter. Her March 11 session, "Tools for Communication and Influence," will give participants opportunities to learn and practice different methods of communicating to improve organizational effectiveness and relationships in the workplace.

Tery Medina, national origin coordinator for the Southeastern Equity Center, will conduct two three-hour workshops on March 9 that address "What Does Your District Need to Serve Your Emergent ELL Population?" Part I, "A Plan," helps districts develop or revise a district plan for providing services to meet the needs of limited English proficiency (LEP) and immigrant students. Part II, "Increased Understanding," provides information on identification and placement of LEP students, staffing, professional development needs, and student services and evaluation.

Medina also will conduct a two-hour session on March 10, "Language Minority Parents: A Matter of Inclusion." The session focuses on practical tips and practices that encourage involvement of parents of LEP students in school activities.

Debbie Silver calls upon her 30 years of experience in the classroom and work with learners from primary to university levels for her Thursday morning three-hour workshop, "Going Outside the Lines to Reach Every Learner." Using technology, she will engage workshop participants in classroom activities designed to help students from all backgrounds and experiences construct their own learning.

How does online professional development work and how can educators find the right courses? Those are just a few questions **Barbara Treacy and Leinda Peterman** of the Education Development Center's EdTech Leaders Online will answer on March 9 during their three-hour workshop, "Online Professional Development that Works: Lessons from the Education Technology Leaders Online (ETLO) Program." The workshop offers hands-on exploration of the ETLO courses and workshops, and discussions on effective online learning models.

It's not all work!

Remember the chocolate, chocolate and more chocolate mentioned above? It can be found in abundance on Thursday evening during the Chocolate Reception in the Exhibit Hall. Conference attendees can choose from among decadent chocolate desserts and gourmet delicacies while exploring the products and services of more than 300 exhibitors. The Exhibit Hall will remain open Friday and Saturday for educators to preview and purchase the latest in educational tools, software and classroom products.

And, if that wasn't enough, every person registered for the conference has two opportunities to win big prizes. The winner of a plasma TV or computer workstation will be selected at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, March 10, 2006 in the Exhibit Hall. The winner of a cruise will be named at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday in the Cyber Café. The Cyber Café offers a place to relax, grab a bite to eat and access wireless Internet connections during the conference. For both drawings, winners must be present to receive the prizes.

For more conference information, contact Thelma Whiteside at ktlc@education.ky.gov, (502) 564-3421 or go to www.kentuckytlc.org.



Lifelong learning

Dorothy Halderby watches as Salyersville Grade School student Billy May completes the steps to create a graph on the computer. The 72-years-young Halderby has been a teacher's assistant for 18 years. She currently works in the Magoffin County school's computer lab and is an example to students that learning is a lifelong venture.

Changed your address?

Kentucky Teacher receives mailing addresses for all active Kentucky certified classroom teachers and administrators from the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System. If you are employed by a Kentucky public school, you can change your address or mailing information in one of two ways:

- Complete a change of address form that can be downloaded from the retirement systems' Web site at <http://ktrs.ky.gov/ktrsresources/MEMinfo/chgaddrnew.htm>.
- Submit a written request that includes your old address, new address, your Social Security number and your signature.

Mail the form or your written request to:

Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System
ATTN: Tammy Brown
479 Versailles Rd.
Frankfort, KY 40601

If you are not a current teacher or administrator, e-mail your change of address to kyteacher@education.ky.gov or send your change of address information in writing to:

Kentucky Teacher
612 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

Leadership Letter

Compiled by Joy Barr
joy.barr@education.ky.gov

KVHS spring offerings

The Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS) offers free — for the 2006 spring term — many of its online interactive, facilitated, professional development courses. Two new courses will premier: Space Science Contact and Activities for Educators, and Library Media Center Programs and Services. Check online for a complete listing of available courses. Because of expected high demand for free KVHS online courses, registration to one free course per participant is on a first-received, first-placed basis.

www.kvhs.org

The 'Digital Divide'

Has using the Internet become second-nature to most people? Not so for all Kentuckians.

According to a new U.S. Census Bureau report, Kentucky ranked 42nd among the states in 2003, with 49.9 percent of Kentucky homes reporting "presence of the Internet." Kentucky ranked 41st, with 58.4 percent reporting "presence of a computer" in the home.

Fifty-five percent of American households had "net access at home in 2003," triple the percentage in 1997.

www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/computer.html

Culture of literacy

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has released a new field guide on adolescent literacy for school leaders. Support from the Bill

and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation is helping NASSP distribute a free copy of the guide to every middle-level and high school principal in the country.

"Creating a Culture of Literacy: A Guide for Middle and High School Principals" discusses the importance of implementing literacy strategies across the curriculum. The guide gives practical steps and examples of ways to confront the deficit in literacy skills in secondary schools. It also offers specific action steps, successful school profiles, additional research-based expertise, and tips on developing a literacy program at the school-building level.

www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec.asp?CID=62&DID=62

Parent Academy focuses on reading in Henderson County

Educators in Henderson County Schools are seeing results from an increased district-wide focus to improve literacy skills. Reading results on the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) show increases in eight of the district's 11 schools between 2004 and 2005.

For the second year, the district sponsored a Parent Academy to kick off the 2005-2006 school year. This year's event, "Reading — A Family Adventure," welcomed more than 800 families to an evening of reading entertainment.

Sessions based on popular storybooks taught students and parents how much they can learn from books. Students and parents watched chemistry experiments and studied insects. They dramatized events from books, illustrated stories and learned to exercise their minds.

Each school's Family Resource and Youth Service Center, local government agencies and businesses distributed information about their services. Each child received an age-appropriate book.

"We are very pleased with the turnout and feel it was a wonderful way to kick off the year — stressing the importance of reading," said Becky Cole, assistant superintendent of curriculum and coordinator of the event.

Good places to raise children

Five Kentucky communities — Lexington, Louisville, Mt. Sterling, Murray/Calloway County and Ohio County — have been selected among the America's Promise 100 Best Communities for Young People. Communities were recognized for their commitment to providing healthy, safe and caring environments for young people and effective education opportunities. America's Promise — The Alliance for Youth mobilizes people across the country to build the character and competence of young people.

www.americaspromise.org/

Reading demonstration sites

The Kentucky Reading Project (KRP) has selected classrooms in 15 elementary schools as demonstration sites that showcase best practices in literacy instruction. Teachers in these classrooms provide opportunities for observation, consultation and professional development for teachers and administrators. Selected schools are: Briarwood Elementary (Warren County), East Elementary (Calloway County), Eminence Elementary (Eminence Inde-

pendent), Kenton Elementary (Kenton County), McBrayer Elementary (Rowan County), McDowell Elementary (Floyd County), McFerran Preparatory Academy (Jefferson County), Morningside Elementary (Elizabethtown Independent), Nicholas Elementary (Nicholas County), North Warren Elementary (Warren County), Russell Primary (Russell Independent), Ryland Heights Elementary (Kenton County), Southside Elementary (Harrison County), Southside Elementary (Woodford County) and Williamstown Elementary (Williamstown Independent).

Arts Council releases study

The Kentucky Arts Council and the Collaborative for Teaching and Learning have released a study, "Status of Arts Education in Kentucky Public Schools." The study will assist state and local arts and education partners in evaluating, planning and advocating for quality arts programming and instruction.

<http://artscouncil.ky.gov>

Kentucky Alliance Schools offered resource kit savings

The International Center for Leadership in Education is offering to its National Successful Practices Network member schools in Kentucky two High School Resource Kits at a special rate. These schools, who form the core membership of the Kentucky Secondary Schools Alliance, are high schools and their feeder middle schools involved in Kentucky's refocusing secondary education initiative.

The kits provide resource materials in the areas of 9th-grade transition and small learning communities. "Reinventing 9th Grade — Academics Through Personalization" lays out the variables that school leaders should consider to cause all 9th graders to be successful academically and graduate on time.

The "Creating Small Learning Communities" kit offers planning and implementation suggestions to help large schools create small learning communities.

The resource kits, regularly priced at \$295 each, will be available to National Successful Practices Network member schools in Kentucky for \$150 each. More information about each kit can be found on the Web at www.daggett.com/hsresources.html. To purchase these resources, contact Lori Kelly at lori@leadered.com, (518) 399-2776, Ext. 210.

Kentucky gets grant to develop longitudinal student data system

Kentucky has received a \$5.8 million grant from the Institute of Education Sciences to develop and implement a longitudinal student testing data system. Longitudinal data is collected for an individual student or group of students over a period of time, usually from grade level to grade level. The Kentucky Department of Education will use the grant to develop and implement the Kentucky Instructional Data System (KIDS) to provide educators and researchers with the tools to follow achievement for individuals and groups of students over time.



Photo by Rick McComb

Having their say

Matthew Longacre, a student at Larry A. Ryle High School (Boone County), and other students from northern Kentucky listen to Bob Sexton, chairman of the Prichard Committee, during the opening session at one of five "Voices of Reason" meetings held this fall by the Kentucky Department of Education. Middle and high school students participated in activities and discussions on ways to improve secondary education in Kentucky. To find out what students are saying, go to www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?Students on the department's Web site.

Students discover how farming feeds them



Dressed for a day on the farm in her straw hat and pink boots, Owingsville Elementary student Taylor Shrout tries her hand at milking Daisy, the mechanical milk cow.



Bath County High School FFA member and program volunteer, Felicia Buckner, explains the rules of the "Inherit the Farm" game to the elementary students. The board game gives students the opportunity to "run" a farm and use different strategies to deal with real-life obstacles like bad weather, poor crops and bankruptcy.

By Cathy Lindsey

cathy.lindsey@education.ky.gov

If you were to ask many of today's students where their food comes from, most would say it comes from the grocery store. Most young people don't realize much of their food comes from our soil, and even fewer Kentucky students have an opportunity to learn first-hand the value of agriculture in our state.

Recently, students at Owingsville Elementary School in Bath County learned about food from Chef Parmesan; Derby, a talking horse; and Daisy, a milk cow. These characters are part of a new mobile program for Kentucky elementary schools called "Agriculture Adventures: Kentucky," created by the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) museum in Columbus, Ohio.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture implemented the project in partnership with the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association, the Kentucky Pork Producers and the West Kentucky Growers Cooperative to promote awareness about Kentucky agriculture. The program's activities help elementary students follow food from the farm to the table.

"We wanted to find a way to introduce basic concepts about agriculture into the classroom," said Rayetta Boone, coordinator of Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom (KAEC), "so that students can make that connection and start to question where it all begins."

Considering many American students are three to four generations removed from the farm setting, we are quickly becoming a society that is not directly involved in growing our own food, Boone said. This knowledge about food production is critical if we are to continue as an independent and self-sufficient country.

During the assembly portion of the program, Chef Parme-



san and Derby host "Lunchroom Live." This activity takes students through the process of growing ingredients to make a pizza. The chef starts with the first ingredient, soil. Students learn about field preparation, photosynthesis, growing and processing wheat, and making cheese.

Following "Lunchroom Live," smaller groups of students participate in a series of hands-on activities at 10 different stations. These activities build upon the information presented during the assembly. At one station, students can milk Daisy, the fiberglass cow. At other stations, students grind wheat into flour, test soil samples and learn about methods of tagging animals from branding to Radio Frequency Identification.

Each station presents a different challenge. At one, students must identify which items were made from corn. At another, students must make smart choices in order to be profitable farmers. Students at another station learn what common products come from different animals.

"The program provides students with opportunities to engage in these independent activities while also participating in cooperative learning groups," said Owingsville Elementary Principal Sharon Smith. "The students also relate the lessons to content and to their interests

and life experiences."

"Agriculture Adventures: Kentucky" provides opportunities for students to explore and apply ideas from the National Science standards, as well as Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment in science.

"This program will challenge students to make observations, investigate new things and use problem-solving skills," Boone said. "Agriculture-related concepts align strongly with science, math, social studies and practical living under the core content."

Teachers at Owingsville Elementary used materials provided by COSI to incorporate the lesson into their classroom activities before and after the mobile exhibit's visit to the school. Information packets and Web sites served as resources to help teachers form lesson plans around the program.

"Agriculture Adventures: Kentucky" will be available to Kentucky schools for another two years. The Kentucky Corn Growers Association, the Kentucky Soybean Board and the Kentucky Small Grain Growers Association are providing annual operating funds for the three-year program.

The program will accommodate up to 480 students and is available to 125 schools per year. The fee is \$875 per day, and the school must provide 12-15 volunteers to staff the hands-on stations.

"Agriculture Adventures: Kentucky" has a limited number of open days for this spring. Reservations for the 2006-2007 school year will begin Feb. 7, 2006. Make reservations by calling (888) 819-2674, Ext. 1703. For more information, go to www.cosi.org.

Contact: Rayetta Boone, Kentucky Department of Agriculture, (502) 564-4696, rayetta.boone@ky.gov



Kentucky
Teacher

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lexington, Kentucky
Permit No. 1